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PARENTAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE VOCATIONAL-
COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL

BY

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read,
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for
acceptance, a thesis entitled "Parental Attitudes
Towards The Vocational-Composite High School" submitted
by Pierre Paul Turgeon in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine parental attitudes toward the vocational-composite high school held by parents of children who were attending these schools in Edmonton during the school year 1967-1968.

The sample consisted of parents of sixty-four grade eleven students equally distributed among the four selected schools on the basis of sex and educational program, i.e. vocational and academic.

Data were obtained using the interview method. On the basis of these data several conclusions were made:

(1) The matriculation program was favoured over the vocational program by the majority of the parents.

(2) Parents were divided in their opinion as to whether vocational education should be taught in the high school.

(3) The majority of parents indicated that the vocational program in high school should consist of exploratory vocational courses.

(4) The majority of parents were generally dissatisfied with their lack of involvement in deciding what program their child should take.

(5) Most parents whose children were in the program leading to matriculation were satisfied with the



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program their child was taking.

(6) The majority of parents of vocational students were generally dissatisfied with the program their child was taking.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE THESIS PROBLEM

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in Canada is a problem of national scope. Our age is demanding skilled technicians and professional experts and to the task of preparing these people the educational system is increasingly dedicated (Clarke, 1962).

When Education is set aside in a special establishment and there given basic societal tasks, its control becomes an important matter. Who will determine what shall be done, what shall be taught, and who shall be educated, become critical questions.

Those responsible for organizing the educational problem in Alberta have stated that their fundamental goal is to provide a sound education for all (Swift, 1963). They have stated that this goal can be achieved most effectively through a school program designed to accommodate the varied abilities, interests and aspirations of the increasingly large numbers of students who are endeavouring to complete their schooling. This rationale has led to a shift in emphasis from a purely academic program to a program including vocational courses.

The federal government, in 1960, facilitated this shift of emphasis in programs by passing the Vocational Training Assistance Act. The Act provided for financial

assistance to provinces undertaking vocational programs. One of the results of this Act has been the advent of vocational-composite high schools.

II. THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to examine how the vocational-composite high school is being received by the public. Specifically the study will examine parental attitudes towards the vocational-composite high school held by parents of children who were attending these schools in Edmonton.

Questions to be answered by this study have been adapted from studies conducted by Lindel (1953), Hines and Grobman (1957), Brimacombe (1957), Downey (1960), Menear (1960), Hartrick (1961), Bride (1962), and MacIsaac (1967).

Specifically, the questions to be answered by this study are:

- (1) What type of program do parents want for their children presently attending the vocational-composite high school?
- (2) What is the type of program wanted by parents for boys on the one hand and for girls on the other, presently attending the vocational-composite high school?
- (3) Do parents believe vocational education should be taught at the high school level?

- (4) What are the reasons stated by parents for including vocational education as part of the high school curriculum?
- (5) What types of vocational education do parents believe the high school should offer?
- (6) How much involvement did parents have in deciding what programs their child would take?
- (7) What program would parents want for their child if their child were starting high school again?
- (8) If parents of matriculants are satisfied with the program their child is taking, what are the reasons for their satisfaction?
- (9) If parents of vocational students are satisfied with the program their child is taking, what are the reasons for their satisfaction?
- (10) If parents of matriculation or vocational students are dissatisfied with the program their child is taking, what are the reasons for their dissatisfaction?
- (11) If parents were asked to state their degree of satisfaction with the program their child is taking, what would these results be?

- (12) If parents were asked to indicate what they feel to be the main inhibitory factor to the progress of their child in high school, what would they say?

III. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Students. This term includes the sample of grade eleven students attending four vocational-composite high schools in Edmonton.

Parents. This term includes those parents of the sample of grade eleven students attending the four vocational-composite high schools in Edmonton.

Matriculation program. This term will apply to that type of program offered in Grades X, XI, and XII which eventually leads to university entrance.

Vocational education. This term will apply to that type of program offered in Grades X, XI, and XII which leads to a high school diploma with exposure to a certain line of work or lines of work, e.g. pipe fitting, mechanics, automotives, commercial art, business education, etc.

IV. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to an investigation of parental attitudes towards the vocational-composite high school. The study was also limited to four vocational-

composite high schools in Edmonton.

In order to use the interview technique for gathering data, the parents of sixty-four grade eleven students from the four composite high schools were chosen. Of this number the sample consisted of thirty-two parents of boys (sixteen from the vocational pattern and sixteen from the matriculation pattern) and thirty-two parents of girls (sixteen from the vocational pattern and sixteen from the matriculation pattern).

The study did not deal with the other high schools in Edmonton.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In a democratic society schools play a large part in the development of our children. There is probably no other institution, with the possible exception of the family, which has as much influence on the youth of today and the future citizens of tomorrow (Conant, 1959).

With this in mind therefore, it is important to keep in continual proper perspective the wishes of parents concerning the education of their children. It is hoped that this investigation will provide information regarding the desires and values which parents hold regarding the vocational-composite school program in Edmonton.

The study could also serve to reveal gaps in

information or misunderstandings on the part of parents regarding the educational program.

Another contribution of this study could lie in its implications for further research.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter II includes a review of the related literature which is limited to research, periodicals and books concerned with the present study. A few investigations with relevance to the general area of vocational education were also included. Chapter III deals with the procedure of the study. Chapter IV deals with the presentation of the data. Chapter V deals with the summary and conclusions of the study. Chapter VI presents the implications for the field of Education and the implications for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

I. INTRODUCTION

In reviewing some of the related literature for this study the writer deals with two major areas of research:

- (1) Literature which is related to the curriculum of the vocational school. In dealing with this area, points of view as expressed by educators and industrialists are considered.
- (2) Literature which deals with the public's opinion of education generally and vocational education specifically.

II. LITERATURE DEALING WITH CURRICULUM

Barlow, (1966) discusses the function of vocational education since World War II. During this period evidence has been accumulating which shows the dependence of the economy upon the vocational competence of the masses of people (Brandon and Evans, 1965; Swanson and Dramer, 1965).

Barlow continues by indicating that the change has not been so much in the content and direction of vocational education but rather in the clarity of its relationship to other cultural forces. The recent

achievements of inventing invention speed up the rate at which technology creates new designs for living. Scientific progress, says Barlow, has outdistanced social progress. He continues this line of reasoning by making the following comment:

Education has budged very little under the impact of the new dimensions for living. We have crammed many things into the curriculum, let the subject matter areas fight with each other for a claim to space, and have insisted upon holding to some arbitrary number of years, or semesters, of study of a subject rather than finding out what competencies are to be achieved. There are relatively few preferred pathways through the subject matter maze and most of the students have been forced into one pattern because we have said that only this one has the greatest ultimate value. We believe in tempting students to think, but it only counts when they think about a few special elements of our total culture.

It used to be possible to send the school failure, the one weeded out of the preferred pathway, to the vocational program on the pretext that if he couldn't work with his mind then obviously he could work with his hands. This was sugar coated by talking about students with many intelligences -- mechanical, clerical, social, abstract, and others -- but we didn't really carry the rationale into practice. Then technology played a dirty trick. Occupational tables were upset. In order to succeed in an occupation the worker had to be able to work with his hands and his mind. The other occupations -- those in which he only worked with his hands -- ceased to exist. So the students who couldn't read, write, and calculate were returned to their classes with the demand, "Teach them to read, write and calculate, otherwise we can't teach them to work." (p. 117).

This is the challenge that faces the vocational-composite high school today.

What shall these schools teach? This question has become a provocative issue. Ziel (1965) discussed the curriculum of the vocational schools as being the product of three factors: social needs, students interests and institutional facilities. He felt that the vocational schools should attempt to fill the need of industry for well-qualified employees in certain technical occupations. Ziel continued this argument:

... preparation for the occupations fulfills the student's interest in the duties of the occupation as well as its financial rewards, advancement, security, and social status. The facilities that the institution has, or is able to obtain, determine the particular occupations to be served (p. 12).

Barlow (1965) stated that programs offered by vocational high schools result from long term planning for the needs of the area. This opinion is similar to Ziel's view in that both consider the program as being somewhat dependent on the needs of the area and of industry. Barlow continues:

These programs must accomplish two purposes: they must satisfy the present needs of business and industry, and they must be able to satisfy the anticipated needs (p. 12).

Curriculum planning to meet these anticipated needs can be done as Ziel (1965) said:

... by simply matching the manpower needs with the available supply projected as far as possible into the future, and then to try to lessen the gap between needs and supply by curriculum planning (p. 13).

Scott (1964) spoke of the vocational school and its curriculum as an industrialist vitally interested in graduates from these institutions. He mentioned the need for industry and educators to establish closer collaboration on the substance of training courses. This he felt would be to the betterment of industry and the vocational schools. He had, however, another concern as to what should be offered in these schools:

Educationists must also plant in the minds of young people additional seeds, including inquisitiveness, diversity of interests, and intelligent appreciation of the motives and problems of free enterprise industry. Such attitudes, when superimposed on technical skills will enable vocational-technological graduates to compete for the supervisory promotions which are so prolific in modern industry (p. 49).

He continued by mentioning more non-technical attributes which should be part of the vocational school curriculum. He cited what he calls the five most important characteristics of successful technicians:

They have pride of workmanship. It is the lack of this quality which prompts our managers to resist educationists who urge that technical school dropouts be offered "compromise" opportunities in industry. If lack of pride or initiative has been the cause of a student dropping out, industry doesn't want him.

The successful technologists also has inquisitiveness. This is a healthy curiosity for better ways to do old jobs, a compulsion to rewrite the shop manual and throw out the old one, a desire for wide knowledge of other jobs, a habit of questioning the status quo.

He has aggressiveness, a willingness to accept additional responsibilities, a stubbornness against

conforming, a bent for defying tradition.

He has compatibility, a talent for getting along with people, for influencing, directing and learning from people.

I cannot over stress the crucial need for such qualities in our young people entering industry today. I am convinced that the seeds shown be sowed in the classroom (p. 52).

The responsibility as to where these qualities should be developed seems clearly defined by Scott. It is true that other institutions are also responsible for the development of such qualities but it seems that the vocational school must accept its share of the responsibility (Radke, 1965; Tiedeman, 1965; Emerson, 1965, Broudy, 1965).

Scott (1966), when discussing curriculum at another time, considered the attitudes of general managers and executives. He stated they felt that the schools should give the student a broad vocational or technical base first, then gravitate to specific skills in order that the students become adaptive to the changing context of the opportunities ahead. He made the following statement: "Nothing is so perishable, in this world, as a narrow skill (p. 54). He continued by expressing the opinion that the importance of training in skill development cannot be overemphasized. He and others (Ziel, 1965; Barlow, 1965; Broudy, 1965) stated that this adaptive type of training can be incorporated in the teaching of the basic mathematics and sciences, the fundamental skills

of communication, and other subjects in the vocational school curriculum, and if done, will give students the individual flexibility which is necessary within their specific trade groups. It also arms the students with the capability for advancement. Scott (1966) said that there is a danger in confining one's self to a particular skill, in training "for a job" rather than laying a foundation in general knowledge, and the ability to organize one's work assignments. These traits, he believed, if developed, will be an asset to the student throughout his working career. He made the following statement:

It is felt that vocational schools should help lay a foundation for later specialization. They should not confine the individual by attempting to deal with the specialization itself, which may become outdated quickly (p. 55).

The concept of future orientation when discussing the vocational high school curriculum is discussed by many writers (Ziel, 1966; Walsh, Selden et al, 1964; Dymond, 1964). They discuss the rationale that a realistic vocational program must not only prepare our youth for entry into occupational skills but must also provide for what Ziel (1966) calls "education in depth" while recognizing that retraining will be required when school ends and employment commences.

Irvine (1965) voiced his concern about the vocational high school curriculum:

How can we possibly know what courses to prescribe in our vocational high schools if we do not know what skills are being demanded in the labor market now or will be demanded over the next twenty years? We cannot measure the expectiveness of manpower policies by an examination of the number of new enrolments. Vocational-technical training that takes place in a vacuum of labor-market policy could turn out to be largely waste. Training, to be effective, must be integrated into an active, national labor market policy (p. 67).

Channeling or directing the curriculum of the school to the anticipated needs of society and more specifically the labor market policies was the concern of other writers (Ford, 1962; Brandon and Evans, 1965; Swanson and Kramer, 1965; Arnstein, 1965).

Walsh, Selden et al. (1964) concerned themselves primarily with a description of the contemporary program of vocational education in the vocational-composite high schools with an emphasis upon instruction and curriculum. In summary the authors pointed out that it becomes clear that the requirements for vocational education for the future will be such as to give top priority to program flexibility in order to ensure that the school curriculum being taught is in terms of the "present and anticipated needs of society" (Barlow, 1964).

Trends in the social and economic stability, as mentioned by Barlow, have implications on vocational education as Ginzberg (1964) sees it as well. In discussing these implications he mentions that we should

strengthen the relationship between vocational education, management, and labor in order to deepen the range of instruction available in our vocational schools. Ginzberg also mentioned the advancement of science and technology:

The employability of young people in the future will depend on their preparation in the fundamentals of science and technology. Vocational schools must concern themselves with the development of these skills (p. 113).

Ziel (1965) discussed what he believed to be a rethinking by the Canadian people about their commitment to education. He continued by indicating that for the first time in Canada, public opinion is now beginning to respect the intellectual as well as the vocational pursuits of our youth. This has come about, Ziel felt, because of the growing realization of the complexities of industrial processes and the need to have skilled technicians with technological knowledge and manual skills to help scientists and engineers. Ziel concluded by saying:

These projections of industrial change can be either banners of hope or harbingers of disappointment to the youth who will enter productive society, depending on how well these young people are prepared today in our vocational schools (p. 8).

III. RELATED LITERATURE DEALING WITH THE PUBLICS' VIEW OF EDUCATION

Just prior to World War II a study entitled "What

People Think About Youth and Education" was conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion. The sample was drawn from the total population of the United States. The significance of the study lies in that it involved the first effort to gain a national view of education by the public. The findings indicated the following:

(1) schools should offer equal educational opportunities to all youth; (2) there was a general satisfaction with the present program of public education; (3) a special program was recommended for unemployed youth who were not in school; (4) belief in freedom to discuss controversial issues in school was expressed.

In 1944 a study entitled "The Public Looks at Education" was conducted by the National Opinion Research Centre. When the public was asked to answer what they thought schools should offer, the respondents made the following observations: (1) consideration should be given to re-evaluating teaching methods and curriculum; (2) consideration should be given to re-evaluating the administrative organization and the physical equipment in the school; (3) there should be greater emphasis on character and citizenship education.

These results indicate that parents were beginning to evaluate somewhat critically the educational system.

Hines and Grobman (1957), studied parental perceptions of public schools and the extent of knowledge

parents had concerning the operation of the schools.

The results showed as the authors stated:

... that parents were generally pleased with their schools. Most of them indicated approval of the total school program, home-work assigned, disciplinary procedures and teaching methods (p. 24).

The study, however, did report that parents were poorly informed in the areas pertaining to philosophy of the school, curriculum flexibility, provisions for exceptional and handicapped children, and the selection and rating of teachers.

Downey (1960) completed a study dealing with the public's perception of the task of education. The study, as reported, had three broad purposes: (1) to identify the elements of the task of public education; (2) to determine the extent to which the public perceived these elements to be important aspects of public education, and (3) to discover the bases of differences in public opinion regarding the relative importance of the various task elements. The study reported the following findings: (1) geographic locality seemed to be a determiner of educational viewpoint; (2) the occupation and education of the parents were the best predictors of educational viewpoint. The more schooling the parent had and the higher the occupational rating, the more likely the parent was to favor intellectual development; (3) age, race, and religion were less reliable predictors of

educational beliefs; (4) community type, income, and proximity-to-school did not prove to be variables which were closely associated to the educational viewpoint of parents.

Hartrick (1961) completed a follow-up study to Downey's work. The sample included educators, parents, and high school students of three differentiated school districts. The following are the major findings of the study: (1) generally educators and parents visualized the high school program in a similar fashion; (2) expectations varied on the basis of the respondent's educational or occupational level and it was possible to predict, with some degree of accuracy, the respondent's perception of the task of the high school on the basis of his educational and occupational level; (3) differences in perceptions of the task of the high school reflected respondents' views of the different needs of youth; (4) both the educators and parents perceived the need for the school to undertake some responsibility for the development of social skills; (5) both educators and parents regarded the primary task of the school to be the intellectual development of the child, with particular emphasis on learning skills; (6) both educators and parents perceived the high school as being vocational in nature in that all courses prepare a student for further education or a career; (7) the high school

student tended to de-emphasize all things intellectual, emphasize all things social, and reject vocational training; and (8) since there was such agreement between educators and parents regarding the task and programs of the high school, reasons for public criticism of education may be due to their perceptions of the results of the school program.

Brimacombe (1957) constructed a scale to measure adult attitudes towards the educational system of Alberta. The purpose of the study was to provide data for the construction of an attitude scale. The aspects of education covered were the value of a general education, discipline, teacher efficiency, curriculum and costs. The following is a summary of findings: (1) changes in curriculum and teaching methods were requested by almost half of the respondents; (2) no significant differences in attitudes were found to exist among persons living in cities, towns, villages or rural areas; (3) the higher the level of education of the respondents the less favorable their attitudes were towards the Alberta educational system; (4) women were found to have a more favorable attitude than men toward Alberta's educational system.

Menear (1960) completed a study dealing with the relationship between parental opinion and pupil achievement. The purpose of the study was to devise criteria

which could be used to identify favorable and critical groups of parents with respect to their attitudes towards education. The results of this investigation showed the following relationships: (1) low achievement was found to be associated with critical or indifferent attitudes of parents towards local classrooms; (2) parents of the highest achievers gave only mediocre ratings to the local classes; (3) most favorable ratings came from the parents of children achieving in the average to slightly above average range.

Bride (1962) completed a study of public attitudes towards the high schools in Lethbridge. The purpose of this study was to obtain the attitudes of parents, teachers and students regarding their satisfaction with the job the high school was doing.

For the purposes of this review only the parts of the study which related to the school program will be discussed. The following three important perceptions of curriculum were investigated: (1) the adequacy of course offerings in the Lethbridge high schools; (2) the treatment of subject matter in the classroom; and (3) citizenship development.

The study found that: (1) in general, the respondents felt the teaching methods employed were fairly satisfactory; (2) respondents felt there was no serious deficiency in the availability of courses, however,

a sizeable number suggested the addition of courses of a technical, commercial and fine arts nature;

(3) respondents felt the schools did a satisfactory job of teaching citizenship, but the teachers were less pleased with the job being done in this area.

Recently MacIsaac (1967) conducted a study of parental perceptions of the high school curriculum in Vulcan county. The parents comprising the sample in this study generally were part of two categories: parents whose children were enrolled in the matriculation program; and, parents whose children were enrolled in the non-matriculation program. Sixty per cent of the total number of parents of children enrolled in the high school in Vulcan comprised the sample. MacIsaac found that the vast majority of parents wanted their children to take the matriculation program. It was also found that all the parents of matriculation students were satisfied with their childrens' program whereas the majority of parents of non-matriculation students were dissatisfied.

Although the MacIsaac study did not deal specifically with the vocational aspect of the high school, because of the lack of vocational facilities available in the Vulcan high school, it did provide the investigator with information concerning parental perceptions of the high school curriculum in a rural setting. As a result of this study, it was interesting to speculate how parents

viewed the vocational-composite high school in an urban setting such as Edmonton.

III. SUMMARY

In reviewing the literature for this study an attempt was made to deal specifically with two areas of research. First, literature which dealt with the curriculum of the vocational-composite high school with particular focus on points of view as expressed by educators and industrialists. Second, literature which dealt with the interview method as a means of obtaining the publics' opinion of education generally and vocational education specifically.

It was found, generally, that both educators and industrialists believed that the curriculum offered in vocational schools should be the product of three factors: the needs of society; the interests of students; and the facilities available in the institution. The curriculum as Ziel (1965) pointed out, "must be able to accomplish two purposes: it must satisfy the present needs of business and industry and it must be able to satisfy anticipated needs (p. 12)."

The studies conclusively held the view that the curriculum offered in vocational schools must maintain a broad theoretical base to provide a general foundation for competence in the work world, while in the realm of

specifics, the schools should be prepared to set up "crash programs" (Irvine, 1965) to meet the current needs of society.

The second area of research dealt with public attitudes towards education. Some general conclusions can be made on the basis of these studies: (1) the public agreed that schools should offer equal opportunities to all youth, (2) there was an apparent general satisfaction with the present program of public education, (3) respondents agreed that schools should deal with character and citizenship development, (4) the occupation and education of respondents seemed to be the best predictors of educational viewpoint, (5) educators and parents regarded the primary task of the school to be the intellectual development of the child, with particular emphasis on learning skills, (6) there was an indication of growing concern, by parents and educators, for vocational education.

The studies by Downey (1960), Hartrick (1961), Bride (1962), and MacIsaac (1967), dealt specifically with perceptions of the high school as held by either teachers, students, administrators or parents. In the MacIsaac study parental perceptions of the high school curriculum in a rural setting, Vulcan county, were investigated. The vocational-composite high school as it exists today in an urban setting is a recent innovation.

It is the intent of the present study to deal with parental attitudes towards the vocational composite high school in an urban setting -- the city of Edmonton.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROCEDURE

I. THE SAMPLE

The subject for this study consisted of sixty-four parents of grade eleven students enrolled in four vocational composite high schools in Edmonton city. Of this number half were parents of children enrolled in the academic program and half were parents of children enrolled in the vocational program. An equal number of parents of boys and girls from both academic and vocational programs was chosen. This information is presented in Table I.

TABLE I

THE SAMPLE

| | School A | School B | School C | School D |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total number of parents of students from each school | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 |
| Number of parents of students from voca- tional program | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Number of parents of students from matri- culation program | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Parents of Boys | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Parents of Girls | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |

Total Number of Parents

64

The parents of grade eleven students were chosen because it was felt that by the time their children had two years experience in high school, parents would have ample opportunity to form opinions regarding the high school program, and, furthermore, a sample chosen at the grade eleven level would probably include more parents of students of a wider range of academic interest and achievement than would a sample chosen from grade twelve.¹

II. PILOT STUDIES: DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTRUMENT

Two pilot studies were conducted prior to the actual study. The purpose of these studies was twofold: (1) to determine the effectiveness of the instrument; and (2) to determine to what extent parents were able to express opinions on matters related to the school. The interview method was used and the writer conducted all of the interviewing.

In the first study the instrument was administered to ten graduate students in Education at the University of Alberta. All of the students interviewed were parents and former teachers or counselors. At the termination of each interview, the effectiveness of the instrument was discussed with the person interviewed. As a result of

¹This same rationale was used in the MacIsaac (1967) study.

these discussions certain recommendations as to how the instrument could be perfected were implemented and the instrument was altered slightly.

The questionnaire was then administered to sixteen parents, four from each school to be included in the actual study. The sample consisted of parents of grade eleven students equally distributed on the basis of sex and educational program, i.e. vocational and academic. The results indicated the instrument to be free of ambiguities and it was decided to proceed with the actual study.

III. THE METHOD

Selection of Participants

The total number of grade eleven students in the four schools selected were categorized into two major groups: (1) students from the academic program; and (2) students from the vocational program. These two groups were then divided into the total number of boys in each program and the total number of girls in each program. This same procedure was carried out with the grade eleven enrolments from each school.

The students in each group were then sampled randomly by drawing names from a hat, and the parents of these students were then contacted by phone. Before the parents were accepted into the sample, they had to

meet the following criteria: (1) willingness to be interviewed; (2) availability of both mother and father for interview. The number of rejects before arriving at the final sample are reported in Table II.

The following is the actual information used in the phone call. There was, however, an awareness by the writer of the need to be as natural as possible:

Hello ... my name is Pierre Turgeon. I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta presently working on my master's degree in Education. I am a parent myself, and I would be interested in interviewing both you and your husband (wife) at your convenience concerning the program your child is taking in high school. Would you be available for such an interview?

With the parents who formed the final sample arrangements were made as to the most suitable time for interviewing. A phone call was made prior to the time of the actual interview to remind the parents.

A total of four parents from each school, two from the academic program and two from the vocational program, were chosen as substitutes for parents from the original sample who were not available for interviewing. Of the sixteen chosen only three had to be used in place of the actual parent chosen in the sample. The reasons for having to use these three parents are as follows: (1) two of the original sample's children quit school and parents did not wish to be interviewed; and (2) the father of one child was transferred and was not available for interviewing.

TABLE II
SELECTION OF GRADE ELEVEN STUDENTS

| Program Child is Taking | Sex of Child | Total Population | | | | Initial Selection* | | | | Final Selection | | | |
|--|--------------|------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------------|----|----|----|-----------------|----|----|----|
| | | S C H O O L | | | | S C H O O L | | | | S C H O O L | | | |
| | | A | B | C | D | A | B | C | D | A | B | C | D |
| Students in Program Leading to Matriculation | Boys | 123 | 182 | 118 | 91 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | Girls | 142 | 177 | 125 | 104 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Total Boys and Girls -- Academic | | 265 | 359 | 243 | 195 | 11 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Students in the Vocational Program | Boys | 222 | 151 | 118 | 108 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| | Girls | 192 | 141 | 134 | 87 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Total Boys and Girls -- Vocational | | 314 | 292 | 252 | 192 | 15 | 8 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Total Boys and Girls in Both Programs | | 579 | 651 | 495 | 387 | 24 | 20 | 25 | 19 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 |

* -- In certain cases the parents chosen initially did not meet the criteria.

All of the interviewing was done by the writer and all the interviews were conducted in the evening.

The Structured Interview

The interviews were conducted in the homes of the parents. There was no attempt to be formal or structured in the initial moments of each interview. Usually the purpose of the interview was explained to the parents. However, there was no attempt to follow the same format in each home prior to the actual interview. When the interviewer felt that the necessary rapport had been established he then proceeded with the main part of the interview. The following are the actual questions used in each interview:²

(1) There are two major programs of study available at the school in which your child is enrolled:

(a) the academic program; and (b) the vocational program.

What program did you want for your child?³

(2) Do you believe vocational education should be taught in the high school?

| No | Yes, for all students | Yes, for those not able to matriculate | Yes, for students who are interested | No opinion |
|----|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------|
|----|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------|

²These questions are adapted from studies by Brimacombe, (1957), Downey (1960), Menear (1960), Hartrick (1961), Bride (1962), and MacIsaac (1967).

³The investigator felt free to elaborate on the terms used in this question if it was found necessary.

(3) What are your reasons for believing vocational education should be taught in the high school?

(4) There are generally believed to be two types of vocational education: (a) exploratory vocational courses; and (b) training for a specific job.⁴ Of these two which do you believe the high school should offer?

(5) How much involvement did you have in deciding what program your child would take?

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| <u>None at all</u> | <u>Some</u> | <u>Satisfied with involvement</u> |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|

(6) If your child were starting school again what program would you want for your child?

(7) If you are satisfied with the program your child is taking what are the reasons for your satisfaction?

(8) Using the following scale what is your degree of satisfaction with the program your child is taking?

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|
| <u>Poorly</u> | <u>Fairly</u> | <u>Well</u> | <u>Very well</u> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|

(9) If you are dissatisfied with the program your child is taking what are the reasons for your dissatisfaction?

(10) What would you consider to be the greatest inhibitory factor to your child's progress in school?

⁴Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA

I. INTRODUCTION

The question to be examined by this study were presented in Chapter One under various headings. In reporting the findings of the study each of these headings will serve as a major division in the chapter. Only the most meaningful responses are presented in this chapter. The remaining responses may be found in the appendices.

II. THE FINDINGS

A. What type of program do parents want for their child presently attending the vocational-composite high school?

The data related to this question is presented in Table III. Eighty-eight per cent of the parents¹ of matriculation students wanted the matriculation program for their child. Sixty-six per cent of the parents of vocational students would have preferred the matriculation program for their child. The demand for the matriculation course was high among both groups.

¹When dealing with parents of matriculants or parents of vocational students, the number will be thirty-two unless otherwise specified.

TABLE III

WHAT TYPE OF PROGRAM DO PARENTS WANT FOR THEIR
CHILD PRESENTLY ATTENDING THE VOCATIONAL -
COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL?

| Category of Parent | Matriculation Program | | Vocational Program | |
|---|-----------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Parents of students in program leading to matriculation | 28 | 88 | 4 | 12 |
| Parents of students in vocational program | 21 | 66 | 11 | 34 |
| Total Number of Parents | 49 | 77 | 15 | 23 |

B. What is the type of program wanted by parents for boys on the one hand and for girls on the other presently attending the vocational-composite high school?

The data related to this question is presented in Table IV. It is interesting to note that there was substantially no difference in sex of offspring relating to the choice of program in that the parents of both boys and girls preferred the matriculation program for their child.

TABLE IV

WHAT IS THE TYPE OF PROGRAM WANTED BY PARENTS FOR BOYS ON THE ONE HAND AND FOR GIRLS ON THE OTHER PRESENTLY ATTENDING THE VOCATIONAL-COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL?

| Category of Parent | Matriculation Program | | Vocational Program | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------------|---------|
| | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Parents of Boys | 23 | 72 | 9 | 28 |
| Parents of Girls | 24 | 75 | 8 | 25 |
| Total Number of Parents | 47 | 73 | 17 | 27 |

C. Do parents believe vocational education should be offered at the high school level?

Data which relate to this question are presented in Table V. Parental responses are categorized under the following headings: (1) no, vocational education should not be taught in the schools; (2) yes, for all students; (3) yes, for students not able to matriculate; (4) yes, for students who are interested; and (5) no opinion.

Fifty per cent of the total sample were in the following categories: (1) yes, for all students (twelve per cent); (2) yes, for students not able to matriculate (twenty-two per cent); and (3) yes, for student who are interested (eighteen per cent).

The findings, however, do indicate that approximately

TABLE V

DO PARENTS BELIEVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SHOULD BE OFFERED AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL?

| Category of Parents | No | | Yes for all students | | Yes for those not able to matriculate | | Yes for students who are interested | | No opinion | |
|---|-----|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|
| | No. | % of total sample | No. | % of total sample | No. | % of total sample | No. | % of total sample | No. | % of total sample |
| Parents of students in program leading to matriculation | 16 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 16 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 |
| Parents of vocational students | 14 | 22 | 8 | 12 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Parents of Girls | 12 | 20 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 1 | 2 |
| Parents of Boys | 18 | 28 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Total for all Parents | 30 | 48 | 8 | 12 | 14 | 22 | 11 | 17 | 1 | 2 |

half of the total sample did not think vocational education or training should be taught in the high school.

D. What kinds of vocational education do parents think high schools should offer?

In the interview, parents were asked the following question: "There are generally believed to be two types of vocational education: (1) exploratory vocational courses; and (2) training for a specific job. Of these two, which do you believe the high school should offer?"

When considering the data in Table VI, seventy per cent of the total sample felt the vocational program should consist of exploratory vocational courses. Of this number forty per cent were parents of students whose program led to matriculation and thirty per cent were parents of matriculation students.

Thirty per cent of the total sample felt vocational schools should train students for a specific job.

The majority of parents seem to think exploratory vocational courses should be taught in high school.

E. What are the reasons stated by parents for including vocational education as parts of the high school program?

Table VII contains the data related to this question. The majority of the reasons given for wishing the high schools to offer vocational courses of an exploratory nature appeared to be the following: (1) to familiarize students

TABLE VI

WHAT KINDS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DO PARENTS
THINK HIGH SCHOOLS SHOULD OFFER?

| Category of Parent | Exploratory Vocational Courses | | Vocational Train- ing for a Special Job | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------|---|---------|
| | No. | Percent | No. | Percent |
| Parents of students in program leading to matriculation. | 26 | 40 | 6 | 9 |
| Parents of vocational students | 19 | 30 | 13 | 21 |
| Parents of Boys | 28 | 43 | 11 | 18 |
| Parents of Girls | 17 | 27 | 8 | 12 |
| Total number of Parents | 45 | 70 | 19 | 30 |

with a number of potential job areas and to expose them to the skills involved in these jobs; (2) high schools cannot offer in depth the skills that are necessary for any particular line of work; (3) to familiarize students with the general world of work; and (4) non matriculants or vocational students have an opportunity to discover and develop their talents.

The reasons why parents thought the high school should offer training for a specific job are as follows: (1) many of the skills presently being taught are usable in the present job market; and (2) many students are ready to begin work after completion of high school and

TABLE VII

WHAT ARE THE REASONS STATED BY PARENTS FOR INCLUDING
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS PART OF THE HIGH SCHOOL
PROGRAM?

| A. Exploratory Vocational Courses | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| To familiarize students with a number of potential job areas and to expose them to the skills involved in these jobs. | 16 | 25 |
| High schools cannot offer in depth the skills that are necessary for any particular line of work. | 7 | 11 |
| To familiarize students with the general world of work. | 6 | 9 |
| Non-matriculants have a chance to discover and cultivate their talents. | 6 | 9 |
| Many students at this age do not know what training they desire. | 4 | 6 |
| Other Responses* | 6 | 9 |
| Total of Response for Reasons Parents want Exploratory Courses. | 45 | 69 |
| B. Training Towards a Specific Job | | |
| Many of the skills presently being taught are usable in the present job market. | 9 | 13 |
| Many students are ready to begin work after completion of high school and do not wish to go on to further education. | 6 | 9 |
| Other Responses* | 4 | 9 |
| Total Responses of Reasons Parents want Training Towards a Specific Job | 19 | 31 |

* -- These responses are cited in Appendix A.

do not wish to go on to further education.

F. How much involvement did parents have in deciding what program their child would take?

Parents responded to this question by indicating their choice of one of three categories on the questionnaire during the process of the interview. The following are the categories from which the choice was made: (1) no involvement in deciding what program their child would take; (2) some involvement in deciding what program their child would take; and (3) satisfaction with involvement in deciding what program their child would take-

The data presented in Table VIII indicate that forty-four per cent of the total number of parents interviewed felt that they had had no involvement in deciding what program their child would take. Thirty per cent felt they had some involvement, while twenty-six per cent were satisfied with their involvement in deciding what program their child would take.

In the total sample, seventy-four per cent of the parents indicated either no involvement or some involvement.

G. What Program would parents want for their child if their child were starting high school again?

The data related to this question are presented in Table IX. Ninety per cent of the parents of children in the matriculation program would have wanted the same program

TABLE VIII

HOW MUCH INVOLVEMENT DID PARENTS HAVE IN DECIDING WHAT PROGRAM THEIR CHILD WOULD TAKE?

| Category of Parent | None at all | | Some | | Satisfied with Involvement | |
|--|-------------|----|------|----|----------------------------|----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Parents of students in program leading to matriculation. | 13 | 20 | 11 | 17 | 8 | 12 |
| Parents of vocational students | 15 | 24 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 14 |
| Total Number of Parents | 28 | 44 | 19 | 32 | 17 | 28 |

TABLE IX

IF YOUR CHILD WERE STARTING HIGH SCHOOL AGAIN WHAT PROGRAM WOULD YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO TAKE?

| Category of Parent | Same Program | | Different Program | |
|---|--------------|----|-------------------|----|
| | No. | % | No. | % |
| Parents of students in program leading to matriculation | 29 | 90 | 3 | 10 |
| Parents of vocational students | 17 | 54 | 15 | 46 |
| Total number of parents | 46 | 72 | 18 | 28 |

for their child if their child were starting high school again while fifty-four per cent of the parents of vocational students were in this category.

The data indicate a general satisfaction among parents of matriculation students with the program their child was taking. Parents of students in vocational programs were less satisfied.

H. If parents of matriculants are satisfied with the program their child is taking, what are the reasons for their satisfaction?

The data for this question are presented in Table XI. Parents responded most frequently in three areas: (1) gives the student the necessary background with which to make the widest possible choice as to a type of career (twenty-eight per cent); (2) gives the student an opportunity to begin work towards further academic training which will result in a better paying line of work (sixteen per cent); and (3) gives the student an opportunity to further his education -- an opportunity which many parents never had (thirteen per cent).

Ninety-one per cent of the parents of children in a program leading to matriculation were satisfied with the program their child was taking.

TABLE X

IF PARENTS OF MATRICULANTS ARE SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRAM THEIR CHILD IS TAKING, WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THEIR SATISFACTION?

| Reasons | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| Gives the student the necessary background with which to make the widest possible choice as to a type of career. | 9 | 28 |
| Gives the student an opportunity to begin work towards further academic training which will result in a better paying line of work. | 5 | 16 |
| Gives the student an opportunity to further his education -- an opportunity which many parents never had. | 4 | 13 |
| Prepares the student with a training which will equip him with the academic skills necessary to cope with the anticipated changes in society. | 2 | 6 |
| Challenges the many abilities of students and results in more enthusiasm towards the program student is taking. | 2 | 6 |
| Other Reasons* | 7 | 22 |
| Total Reasons of Parents of Students in Program Leading to Matriculation who are Satisfied. | 29 | 91 |

* -- These responses are cited in Appendix B.

I. If parents of vocational students are satisfied with the program their child is taking what are the reasons for their satisfaction?

Table XI reports the responses of parents concerning satisfaction with the vocational program. Of the fifty-two per cent who indicated their satisfaction, nineteen per cent stated that the vocational program provides the non-matriculation student with an opportunity to complete high school. The other main reason (nine per cent) is that the vocational program enables the student to complete requirements for entrance into a technical institute or trade school.

The majority of reasons stated by parents who were satisfied with the vocational program which their child was taking seem to centre around the idea that parents wanted their child to have the opportunity to finish high school and possibly continue his education at some other vocational or technical institution.

J. If parents of matriculation or vocational students are dissatisfied with the program their child is taking what are the reasons for their dissatisfaction?

Table XII presents the reasons for program dissatisfaction as stated by parents of children in the program leading to matriculation and parents of children in the vocational program. Forty-eight per cent of parents with their child in the vocational program were dissatisfied.

TABLE XI

IF PARENTS OF VOCATIONAL STUDENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH
THE PROGRAM THEIR CHILD IS TAKING WHAT ARE THE
REASONS FOR THEIR SATISFACTION?

| Reason | Number | Percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| Provides the non-matriculation student with an opportunity to complete high school. | 6 | 19 |
| Enables the student to complete requirements for entrance into a technical institute or trade school. | 3 | 9 |
| Prepares the student for employment in the world of work. | 2 | 6 |
| Interests of students are often channelled in the development of a particular vocational skill. | 2 | 6 |
| Helps the student to gain confidence in himself. | 2 | 6 |
| Gives the student an opportunity to acquire an education without having to take matriculation courses. | 1 | 3 |
| Students are able to succeed at something. | 1 | 3 |
| Total Reasons of Parents of Vocational Students who are Satisfied. | 17 | 52 |

TABLE XII

IF PARENTS OF MATRICULATION OR VOCATIONAL STUDENTS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH THE PROGRAM THEIR CHILD IS TAKING
WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR THEIR DISSATISFACTION?

| Reasons Stated by Parents of Children in Program Leading to Matriculation | Number | Percent |
|---|--------|---------|
| More individual student help in choosing proper courses of study by school personnel. | 1 | 3 |
| No provision available at school for remedial help. | 1 | 3 |
| Inflexible matriculation requirements which prevent many students from completing matriculation. | 1 | 3 |
| Total Reasons* | 3 | 10 |
| Reasons Stated by Parents of Vocational Students | | |
| Inflexible matriculation requirements which prevent many average students from gaining matriculation. | 4 | 13 |
| Student was not placed in the program the parent wanted for him. | 3 | 10 |
| The program was chosen for the student on the basis of his Grade IX marks. | 3 | 10 |
| Other Reasons* | 5 | 15 |
| Total Reasons of Vocational Students | 15 | 48 |

* -- These responses are cited in Appendix C.

Their main reasons were the following: (1) inflexible matriculation requirements which prevent many students from gaining matriculation (thirteen per cent); (2) student was not placed in the program the parent wanted for him (ten per cent); and (3) the program was chosen for the student on the basis of his Grade IX marks. Of the parents of children in the program leading to matriculation only ten per cent were dissatisfied.

The data indicate a dissatisfaction by parents of vocational students with the program their child was taking while only the minority of parents whose children were in the program leading to matriculation were dissatisfied.

K. If parents were asked to state their degree of satisfaction with the program their child is taking, what would these results show?

In the process of each interview, parents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with the program their child was taking. The following is the four point scale which the parent used to indicate his degree of satisfaction:

| | | | |
|--------|--------|-------|-----------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Poorly | Fairly | Well | Very well |

According to the findings in Table XIII fifty-nine per cent of parents of children in programs leading to

TABLE XIII

IF PARENTS WERE ASKED TO STATE THEIR DEGREE OF
SATISFACTION WITH THE PROGRAM THEIR CHILD IS
TAKING, WHAT WOULD THESE RESULTS SHOW?

| Category of Parents | Poorly | | Fairly | | Well | | Very Well | |
|--|--------|----|--------|---|------|----|-----------|----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Parents of students in program leading to matriculation. | 4 | 13 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 19 | 19 | 59 |
| Parents of Vocational students | 17 | 53 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 9 | 28 |
| Total Number of Parents | 21 | 33 | 6 | 9 | 9 | 14 | 28 | 44 |

matriculation were "very well" satisfied with the program of their child while twenty-eight per cent of parents of vocational students were "very well" satisfied. When considering the "well satisfied" category, nineteen per cent of parents of children in programs leading to matriculation were "well satisfied" while nine per cent of parents of vocational students were in this category. Furthermore sixty-eight per cent of parents with children in the matriculation pattern were either "very well" or "well" satisfied, while thirty-seven per cent of parents with children in the vocational pattern were in this category.

When considering the lowest rating of the scale

fifty-three per cent of the parents of vocational students were "poorly" satisfied while only thirteen per cent of parents of matriculants were in this category.

- L. If parents were asked to indicate what they feel to be the main inhibitory factor to the progress of their child in high school, what would they say?

The data related to this question is presented in Table XIV. All parents who were interviewed were asked to indicate what they regarded to be the greatest inhibitory factor to the progress of their child in the program he was taking. The summary of these findings deal with the total sample of parents interviewed. The responses which parents gave most frequently were the child's own lack of enthusiasm and effort, and the child's involvement with his peer group. Student involvement in extra-curricular activities both in and out of school was the next major inhibitory factor stated by parents.

TABLE XIV

IF PARENTS WERE ASKED TO INDICATE WHAT THEY FELT TO BE
THE MAIN INHIBITORY FACTOR TO THE PROGRESS OF THEIR
CHILD IN HIGH SCHOOL, WHAT WOULD THEY SAY?

| Inhibitory Factor to Child's Progress | Parents of Matri- culants | | Parents of Voc- ational Students | | Total for all Parents | |
|--|---------------------------------|-----|---|-----|-----------------------------|-----|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Students own lack of enthusiasm and effort | 9 | 28 | 7 | 21 | 16 | 25 |
| Involvement with peers. | 6 | 19 | 5 | 16 | 11 | 17 |
| Student involvement with extra-curricular school activities and out of school activities (part-time jobs, etc.) | 3 | 10 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 9 |
| No major obstacle | 3 | 10 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 8 |
| Other Responses* | 11 | 33 | 14 | 43 | 25 | 41 |
| Total Number | 32 | 100 | 32 | 100 | 64 | 100 |

* -- These responses are cited in Appendix D.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to examine parental attitudes towards the vocational-composite high school held by parents of children who were attending these schools in Edmonton during the school year 1967 - 1968.

Specific questions to be answered by this study were:

- (1) What type of program do parents want for their children presently attending the vocational-composite high school?
- (2) What is the type of program wanted by parents for boys on the one hand and for girls on the other presently attending the vocational-composite high school?
- (3) Do parents believe vocational education should be offered at the high school level?
- (4) What are the reasons stated by parents for including vocational education as part of the high school program?
- (5) What are the types of vocational education parents believe the high school should offer?
- (6) How much involvement did parents have in deciding what program their child would take?

- (7) What program would parents want for their child if their child were starting high school again?
- (8) If parents of matriculants were satisfied with the program their child is taking what were the reasons for their satisfaction?
- (9) If parents of vocational students were satisfied with the program their child was taking what were the reasons for their satisfaction?
- (10) If parents of matriculation or vocational students were dissatisfied with the program their child was taking what were the reasons for their dissatisfaction?
- (11) If parents were asked to state their degree of satisfaction with the program their child is taking, what would these results show?
- (12) If parents were asked to indicate what they felt to be the main inhibitory factor to the progress of their child in high school, what would they say?

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A summary of the data outlined in Chapter IV follows:

- (1) The matriculation program was favoured over the vocational program by parents of children

enrolled in both of these programs.

- (2) Sex of offspring made substantially no difference in the preference of program by parents in that in both cases the matriculation program was preferred.
- (3) Forty-eight per cent of the parents interviewed (twenty-six per cent of parents with children in a program leading to matriculation, and twenty-two per cent of parents with students in the vocational program) did not think vocational education should be taught in the high school.
- (4) Seventy per cent of the parents interviewed felt the vocational education program should consist of exploratory vocational courses and not training for a specific job.
- (5) Parents who indicated that vocational education should consist of "exploratory vocational courses", gave the following reasons most frequently: (a) to familiarize students with a number of potential job areas and to expose them to the skills involved in these jobs; (b) to familiarize students with the general world of work; and (c) to provide an opportunity for vocational students to discover and develop their talents.

- (6) Parents who indicated that vocational education should consist of "training for a specific job", gave the following reasons most frequently: (a) many of the skills being taught in high school vocational courses are usable in the present job market; and (b) many students are ready to begin work after completion of high school and do not wish to go on to further education.
- (7) When parents were asked the question "How much involvement did parents have in deciding what program their child would take?", twenty-eight per cent of the total sample were in the "satisfied with involvement" category, thirty-two per cent were in the "some involvement" category while forty-four per cent were in the "not at all" category.
- (8) When parents were asked to consider the question: "If your child were starting high school again what program would you want your child to take?", ninety per cent of the parents with children in a program leading to matriculation would have wanted the same program for their children while fifty-four per cent of parents of vocational students were in this category. The data indicate a

general satisfaction among parents of matriculation students with the program their child was taking. Parents of students in vocational programs were less satisfied.

- (9) When parents were asked to state their degree of satisfaction with the program their child was taking seventy-eight per cent of parents with children in the program leading to matriculation were in the "well satisfied" or "very well satisfied" category while thirty-seven per cent of parents with children in the vocational program were in this category. When considering the lower ratings sixty-three per cent of parents with children in the vocational program were in the "poorly satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" category while twenty-two per cent of parents with children in the program leading to matriculation were in this category.
- (10) When parents were asked to indicate what they felt to be the main inhibitory factor to the progress of their child in school, the responses given most frequently by the total number of parents were the following: (1) the child's own lack of enthusiasm and effort; (2) the child's involvement with his peer

group; and (3) the child's involvement in extra-curricular activities both in and out of school.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Some conclusions that appear warranted on the basis of the findings in this study are:

- (1) The matriculation program was favoured over the vocational program by the majority of parents.
- (2) Parents were divided in their opinion as to whether vocational education courses should be taught in the high school.
- (3) The majority of parents indicated that the vocational program in high school should consist of exploratory vocational courses.
- (4) The majority of parents were generally dissatisfied with their lack of involvement in deciding what program their child should take.
- (5) The majority of parents of children in a program leading to matriculation were generally quite satisfied with the program their child was taking.
- (6) The majority of parents of vocational students were generally dissatisfied with the program their child was taking.

CHAPTER SIX

IMPLICATIONS

I. IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

The advent of vocational education in the last few years has brought about a significant change in the traditional school program. Many schools no longer concern themselves with the teaching of academic skills alone. The thinking that all children should be able to cultivate their own particular talents has resulted in our schools offering a diversity of courses from which the student may choose. This has necessitated a relatively new concept of school -- the vocational-composite high school. In a democratic society it is assumed that the schools are responsible to the people they serve. In order for the schools to reflect the wanted attitudes of the public it becomes necessary to somehow keep in proper perspective the desires of the public. This should justify a systematic effort in the form of a survey to determine public opinion on educational matters.

The results of this study showed little public acceptance of the vocational-composite high school. What is the reason for this non-acceptance? This question should be of interest to both local and provincial school administrators. Millions of dollars are being spent yearly on school programs which are not being accepted by many parents of children who are attending these schools.

Could it be that parents have misunderstandings as to why these programs are being provided? Is a public relations effort necessary in order to interpret the purpose and objectives of these programs to parents? Should school administrators provide for more parental involvement in planning and deciding what programs their children should take? Are school administrators and teachers concerned enough about parental attitudes towards the vocational school program?

These are questions which deserve serious reflection. There is no doubt in the mind of the writer that educational administrators are convinced of the importance of the vocational-composite high school. This seems evident by the number of vocational schools being built yearly in our province. It also seems certain to the writer that these schools can provide many children with the opportunity to cultivate their own particular talents.

The immediate concern of this study, however, points out the need to inform parents of the importance of these schools. There is no doubt in the writer's mind that this can be done. Nor is there any doubt in the writer's mind that this should be done.

II. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following are some questions stimulated by this study which could initiate further research:

- (1) Do parents in other sections of the province indicate the same preference for the matriculation program as did parents in the city of Edmonton.
- (2) An investigation of the status of vocational schools as compared to the status of academic schools seems warranted. Student, teacher, and administrator attitudes towards these two programs could also be investigated.
- (3) Do parents of children at the junior high school level indicate the same demand for the academic program as do parents of children in grade eleven.
- (4) What is industry's view of the vocational programs being offered in our schools? Does industry feel the graduates from these programs are trained to meet the present and anticipated needs of society?

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Reasons for Including Vocational Education

What are The Reasons Stated by Parents for Including Vocational Education as Part of the High School Program?

| Exploratory Courses | Number |
|--|--------|
| Many of the trades or specific courses being taught are presently showing signs of becoming obsolete. | 3 |
| Most potential employers want to train their own employees for the particular skills involved in their business. | 2 |
| A greater diversity of courses would provide more students with an opportunity of completing high school. | 1 |
| Total Number of Responses | 6 |

Training Towards a Specific Job

| | |
|--|---|
| Many students show an interest in a specific area of training. If this area is available in the school he should be given an opportunity to develop this interest. | 3 |
| Provides students with incentive in knowing that he is working towards an attainable end. | 1 |
| Total Number of Responses | 4 |

APPENDIX B

Satisfaction With the Matriculation Program

If Parents of Matriculants are Satisfied With the Program Their Child is Taking What are the Reasons for their Satisfaction?*

| Reasons | Number |
|---|--------|
| Gives the student a necessary background in a general form of education. | 1 |
| Teaches the student to appreciate his or her education. | 1 |
| Gives the student the necessary cultural background to make him a future well-rounded individual. | 1 |
| Gives the student opportunities to stand on his own two feet. | 1 |
| Matriculation course is a source of distinction with many parents and students. | 1 |
| Gives the student a good general education to better equip him to face life. | 1 |
| Enables students to think for themselves. | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total Responses of Parents of Matriculants | 7 |

* -- Miscellaneous responses not cited in the thesis.

APPENDIX C

Reasons for Dissatisfaction With Vocational and Matriculation Programs

If Parents of Matriculation or Vocational Students are Dissatisfied With the Program Their Child is Taking, What are The Reasons for Their Dissatisfaction?*

| Parents of Vocational Students | Number |
|---|--------|
| <hr/> | |
| Reasons* | |
| <hr/> | |
| Students should be given an opportunity to take a general program for the first year and then branch off to either the matriculation or vocational program. | 1 |
| Many students with abilities in certain specific lines of work are unable to channel these abilities because they are unable to matriculate. | 1 |
| Some vocational courses which students take do not challenge their abilities. | 1 |
| Students are often asked to take vocational courses that they will never use. | 1 |
| Many of the courses taught are emphasizing skills which are rapidly becoming obsolete in the actual world of work. | 1 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total Responses of Parents of Vocational Students | 5 |
| <hr/> | |

* -- Miscellaneous responses not cited in the thesis.

APPENDIX D

Main Inhibitory Factor to Child's Progress

If Parents Were Asked to Indicate What They Feel To Be the Main Inhibitory Factor to The Progress of Their Child In High School, What Would They Say?*

| Inhibitory Factors to Child's Progress | Parents of Matriculants | Parents of Vocational Students | Total for all Parents |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Certain courses do not challenge the abilities of certain students. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Greater number of courses should be offered in order to attract the interest of a greater number of students. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Students fail to see the purpose of having to take certain required courses. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Lack of discipline in the school or specific classroom. | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Greater assistance necessary in order to try to help the student make the correct choice in grade ten. | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Some teachers are not properly qualified in their specialty. | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Lack of opportunity for children who get behind to catch up (remedial work). | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Many students are not allowed to take the program he or she is interested in. | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Over-emphasis on examinations both term and final exam. | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Total Responses | 11 | 11 | 22 |

* -- Miscellaneous responses not cited in the thesis.

APPENDIX E

The Instrument

INTERVIEW SHEET

Name of Child: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Name of Parent: _____

Type of Program: _____

Sex of Offspring: _____

School: _____

Questionnaire:

- (1) There are two major programs of study available at the school in which your child is enrolled: (a) the academic program; and (2) the vocational program. What program did you want for your child?

- (2) Do you believe vocational education should be taught in the high school?

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|---|---|------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| No | Yes, for all students | Yes for those not able to matric- ulate | Yes, for students who are interested | No opinion |

- (3) What are your reasons for believing vocational education should be taught in the high school?

- (4) There are generally believed to be two types of vocational education or training: (1) exploratory vocational courses; and (2) training for a specific job. Of these two which do you believe the high school should offer?

- (5) How much involvement did you have in deciding what program your child would take?

None at all

Some

Satisfied with
involvement

- (6) If your child were starting school again what program would you want for your child?

- (7) If you are satisfied with the program your child is taking what are the reasons for your satisfaction?

- (8) Using the following scale what is your degree of satisfaction with the program your child is taking?

Poorly

Fairly

Well

Very Well

- (9) If you are dissatisfied with the program your child is taking what are the reasons for your dissatisfaction?

- (10) What would you consider to be the greatest inhibitory factor to your child's progress in school?

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